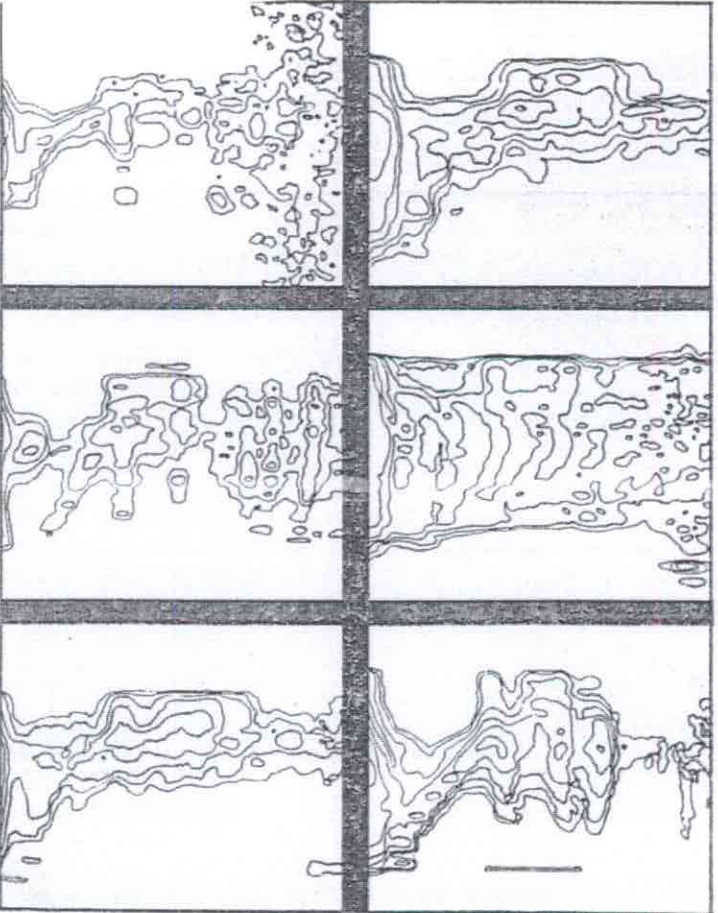


Science's New Breakthrough in Crime Fighting

# Voiceprint Identification Will Be Used At James Earl Ray's Trial



**ACCUSED:** James Earl Ray has been charged with the murder of Dr. Martin Luther King.



**FOOLPROOF PRINTS:** The word 'you' was spoken by five men to create these different voiceprints. One of the men said it twice — top left and bottom right. Notice how these two prints look alike and how they differ from the others. According to the inventor, no two humans can create the same voiceprints.

By **ANDREW TERRENCE**

Voiceprint identification, one of the newest scientific crime fighting techniques, will be used for the first time in a major case — in the trial of James Earl Ray, accused assassin of Dr. Martin Luther King.

The Ray trial is set for November 12 in the Shelby County, Tenn., Courthouse.

Scientists say that everyone has a telltale voiceprint which can be recorded like a fingerprint and used as a positive means of identification. Like the fingerprint, no two human voices are exactly alike.

"Every person attending the Ray trial, including reporters, will be photographed, fingerprinted and voiceprinted," said Shelby County Sheriff William N. Morris.

"This will be the first trial anywhere that such extensive security precautions have been required. This is a serious matter and there will be no carnival air here."

A voiceprint is made by having the speaker's voice recorded and converted into electrical impulses which produce lines on a piece of paper which can be seen and compared with other prints. It is almost similar in appearance to a seismograph which is used to record earthquakes.



**INVENTOR**  
Dr. Lawrence Kersta.

The inventor of the technique is Dr. Lawrence G. Kersta, 60, a retired engineer for the Bell Telephone Co.

Dr. Kersta, in an exclusive interview in the Voiceprint Laboratory, Somerville, N.J., told *The ENQUIRER*: "I'm aware of the plan to use voiceprints at the Ray trial and I'm ready to assist



**MANACLED** Ray keeps his head bowed as he's led to his cell by Shelby County Sheriff William Morris.

## 'Voiceprints Have Never Been Incorrect in a Criminal Case'

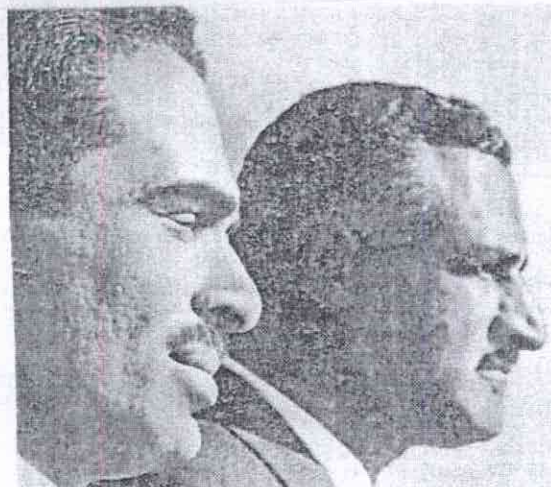
— Dr. Lawrence G. Kersta, Inventor of the New Technique

Tennessee officials when they need me."

Dr. Kersta began his research in voiceprints in 1960, while working for the Bell Telephone Laboratories. Since his retirement two years ago, he has been working to improve the technique.

He said, "Voiceprints, when properly analyzed, are 99 percent accurate. To my knowledge, voiceprints have never been incorrect in a criminal case."

The inventor has been involved in 140 criminal cases involving 40 different law enforcement agencies and he



**FAMOUS CASE:** The voiceprints of Jordan's King Hussein (left) and Egypt's President Nasser were identified as the two men who plotted to blame the U.S. and Britain during 6-day Arab-Israel war.

is scheduled to appear as an expert witness for the prosecution in nine upcoming cases.

"It's impossible for a person to fool the voiceprint recording machine by changing his voice or by imitating another person's voice," Dr. Kersta said.

"We tested the machine with three famous theatrical voice impersonators — Vaughn Meader, Elliot Reed and Shari Lewis. Even our most inexperienced lab personnel had no trouble identifying the real voiceprint from the imitation.

"Factors we use in voiceprint identification are ones that are not under a person's conscious control."

Probably the most famous voiceprint case involves Dr. Kersta's identification of Egyptian President Nasser and Jordan's King Hussein plotting to blame the U.S. and Britain for sending planes in to attack Arab positions during the 6-Day War with Israel in 1967.

The Israelis intercepted the radio-telephone conversation and tape-recorded it. The tape was sent to Dr. Kersta who compared the voiceprints from the tape to prints made from speeches by Nasser and Hussein.

"I'm 100 percent sure the voiceprints were made by the same men," Dr. Kersta said.

Voiceprints have also been

used to trap obscene telephone callers. "We discovered a small town police chief who was making obscene calls to women and we also found, in the next town, a woman who was making obscene calls to a police chief," Dr.

Kersta said. "In another case we cleared a man who had been accused of making threatening telephone calls to his ex-boss."

In May 1964, a Pacific Airlines jet, flying from Reno, Nev., to San Francisco, Calif., crashed killing all 44 persons aboard.

A tape recording of the last message transmitted from the plane to the Oakland control tower could not be understood because the speech was slurred and static and engine noises could be heard.

The Civil Aeronautics Board asked Dr. Kersta to try to figure out the message.

First he screened out all of the static and background noises by using electronic filtering devices. Then he made voiceprints of the words.

Using his own voice he began to speak and make comparisons of the patterns his voiceprints made compared to those from the aircraft's last tape.

Through this method he was able to reconstruct the message: "Skipper's shot . . . We've been shot . . . trying to help."

Later the Civil Aeronautics Board's investigation discovered that there had been a shooting on the ill-fated plane

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